

Transactions

SPRING 2010

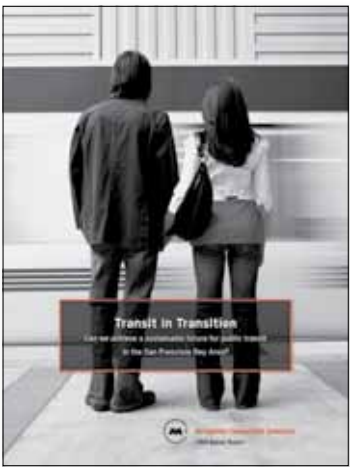
TRANSPORTATION NEWS

FOR THE NINE-COUNTY

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



In Print & Online



2009 Annual Report: “Transit in Transition”

Can we achieve a sustainable future for public transit in the San Francisco Bay Area? That is the question posed by MTC’s just-released *2009 Annual Report*, titled “Transit in Transition.” For the region’s public transit operators, 2009 was a year of recession-ravaged finances, falling ridership and service cutbacks. Yet, the report makes it clear that transit’s problems run deeper than a single year’s setbacks, and outlines a major new initiative launched by the Commission to respond to this critical situation. The aptly named Transit Sustainability Project will undertake to design, fund and implement a flexible and affordable system that more people will use for more trips.

The report can be viewed online at mtc.ca.gov/library. Printed copies of the report may be ordered from the MTC Library: 510.817.5836, or library@mtc.ca.gov (while supplies last).



Tracking East Span Construction in Real Time

The Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee (Caltrans, the Bay Area Toll Authority and the California Transportation Commission) has teamed up with Google Earth to give Bay Area residents and bridge enthusiasts around the world a virtual view from their computers of the Bay Bridge East Span’s self-anchored suspension span as it rises from the Bay. Google Earth users who have the “3D Buildings” feature turned on can view a model of the future bridge and monitor the ongoing construction.

You can find instructions for accessing the East Span on Google Earth as well as views of daily progress on the bridge (taken by stationary cameras) at bata.mtc.ca.gov.



San Francisco Bay’s trademark fog seems to provide the illusion of a cushion as a massive steel deck section from China balances delicately on a temporary truss and begins to slide on ski-like appendages toward its final position.

Iconic Self-Anchored Suspension Span Begins to Rise From the Bay

FIRST SAS DECK SECTIONS FOR BAY BRIDGE EAST SPAN ARRIVE FROM CHINA AND GLIDE INTO PLACE

While the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver were captivating the world, a momentous engineering event also involving skis was unfolding here on San Francisco Bay. Beginning in early February, the first deck pieces for the self-anchored suspension portion of the new Bay Bridge East Span were lifted into place on temporary trestles, and hydraulically pushed on ski-like appendages to their final positions. With each deck piece weighing between 500 and 1,500 metric tons, the lift-place-slide process is a carefully calibrated and choreographed sequence that can take 24 hours per section.

Featuring an iconic 525-foot tower, the self-anchored suspension span, or SAS, will be the crowning piece of the monumental East Span that has been under construction since 2002. The start of erection of the permanent SAS decks marks a pivotal moment in a trans-Pacific partnership that began three years ago. In 2006, the prime SAS contractor, American Bridge/Fluor, signed an agreement with the Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co. Ltd. (ZPMC) in Shanghai to fabricate the East Span’s wing-like steel deck sections as well as the tower.

The productivity of this east-west partnership became visible to the Bay Area public in January 2010 when a ZPMC ship carrying

the first eight deck segments arrived at Pier 7 in Oakland after three weeks at sea. Following some dockside prep work aboard barges, these massive deck pieces embarked on the final leg of their trans-Pacific journey — to the job site adjacent to Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay.

Meanwhile, back in China, fabrication challenges that had delayed the first shipment of deck pieces have been resolved and work continues apace around the clock, with a second shipment of deck pieces arriving in Oakland in April.

“We’ve got the process down, and it’s really going to start to flow from here on,” said Ken Terpstra, Caltrans’ project manager for the new East Span, which is being overseen by a consortium of three agencies making up the Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee: Caltrans, MTC’s Bay Area Toll Authority and the California Transportation Commission.

As the SAS erection accelerates, ships are arriving in the Bay Area from elsewhere as well: from South Korea, where special seismic bearings are being assembled; from Japan, where steel saddles that will cradle the span’s main cable were forged;



Ironworkers bolt together the temporary trusses now serving as supports for the newly installed deck sections.

and from England, where circular bands that will clamp the 137 strands of main cable into a single 2.5-foot bundle are being fabricated.

While the self-anchored suspension span is a global enterprise, it also is a testament to American know-how, grit and determination. Some 75 percent of the steel for the new East Span is U.S.-made, and key elements for both the temporary supports and the permanent structure for the SAS hail from diverse points across the United States, including Pennsylvania, Missouri and Oregon. Assembling it all with precision here on the Bay is a crack team of some 100 U.S. craft workers, including ironworkers, surveyors, operating engineers and laborers. — Brenda Kahn



The huge Left Coast Lifter crane boists a massive deck section.

Letter to Readers

Transactions Survey Points to Hybrid Approach

Dear Reader: If you’re one of the 1,260 people who responded to our readership survey by mail or online, we thank you for taking the time to evaluate *Transactions*, and for giving us guidance as we communicate with our various audiences in the digital age. We found out that our readers are a loyal bunch, with 71 percent reading all or most of each issue. More than half of the respondents (54 percent) agree with this statement: “I love *Transactions* — keep on publishing it!” When it comes to how they would like to get transportation news, readers are split, with 36 percent preferring a printed newsletter, and 28 percent opting for an electronic newsletter. In terms of frequency, the strongest vote — 30 percent of respondents — was for a monthly publication.

The responses point to a hybrid approach. We will introduce a news-oriented, monthly e-newsletter that readers can subscribe to. And we will continue to publish a printed version of *Transactions*, but cut back the frequency, issuing it only as events warrant. While we are embracing the digital age at MTC, we agree with readers that there is still an important role for a printed newsletter to play.

To sign up for the e-newsletter, click on the little red envelope at mtc.ca.gov or e-mail info@mtc.ca.gov.

Announcement

Commission Approves Toll Hike Package For Earthquake Safety

MTC’s Bay Area Toll Authority has approved a new toll schedule for the region’s seven state-owned toll bridges, largely to support seismic safety projects. Beginning July 1, 2010, motorists will in most cases pay \$5 to cross the seven bridges, up from the current \$4 rate. However, the rate will vary on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge according to the day of the week and the time of day — a concept known as congestion pricing. On the Bay Bridge, by far the region’s busiest span, tolls for autos will increase to \$6 during weekday commute hours, dropping to \$4 during off-peak hours on weekdays. On weekends, the auto toll on this bridge will be the same as elsewhere, \$5.

Also new is a toll for carpools, which will be set at \$2.50, or half the regular rate, during weekday commute periods. In addition, the new schedule calls for phasing in increases for the axle-based tolls for trucks, with the first increment delayed until July 1, 2011.

See toll schedule: mtc.ca.gov/tolls.

Special Event

THURSDAY
MAY 13, 2010
16th Annual
Bike to Work Day

Join thousands around the region who will pedal their way to work, school or errands on May 13, or pick a day in May that works for you. Pledge to bicycle at least once in May, and you’ll be eligible for prizes. Better yet, form a team with friends or coworkers, and bike all month long as part of Team Bike Challenge.


Presented by MTC, 511 and Kaiser Permanente with other sponsors. For more information and to register, go to YouCanBikeThere.com.

Calendar

For dates, times and locations of upcoming MTC meetings, visit mtc.ca.gov/meetings.

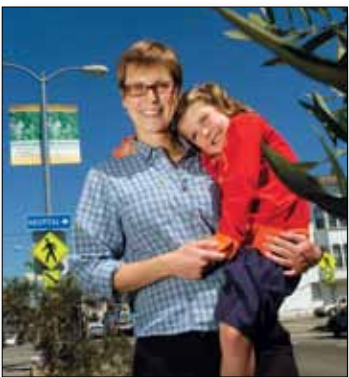
Announcement

Nominations Open for 2010 Excellence in Motion Transportation Awards



Few people who have met her can forget the strong, firm handshake of Fannie Mae Barnes, who broke through long-entrenched gender barriers to become the first, and to date the only, female cable car grip for San Francisco Muni. Her bravery, determination and pioneering spirit are typical of the honorees in MTC’s biennial Excellence in Motion Transportation Awards Program, which is now soliciting nominations.

Barnes was one of a dozen or so people, programs and organizations honored in the 2008 Awards Program. Other winners from that round include the team behind the MacArthur Maze “miracle,” in which the key interchange was rebuilt in just 26 days following the catastrophic explosion of a gasoline tanker truck, and a group of compas-



Gallery of past winners (left to right): Fannie Mae Barnes, San Francisco Muni’s first female cable car grip (2008 winner); Gillian Gillett, who formed a coalition to calm streets in her S.F. neighborhood (2006); AC Transit bus operators who donated over 100 holiday presents to kids at a homeless shelter (2008); Gunn High School’s GO-FAST Program to reduce student driving (2006).

Consider nominating:

- Innovative activities that promote more efficient use of the transportation network.
- An exceptionally friendly and helpful bus driver or other transportation professional or community leader who has made a significant contribution to Bay Area transportation.
- Significant improvements to transportation services for the elderly or persons with disabilities.
- Successful efforts to improve public transit service and encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone.
- Efforts to boost smart growth, reduce harmful carbon emissions or encourage climate-friendly behaviors.
- Accomplishments in the fields of volunteerism, community activism, advocacy, leadership and minority affairs.

sionate bus drivers who donated over 100 Christmas presents to children at a homeless shelter.

Award winners in 2006 in-

cluded a grassroots movement to tame San Francisco traffic and reclaim city streets for pedestrians, and Palo Alto’s Gunn High

School, recognized for its GO-FAST Program that took on teen car culture and created incentives for students to walk, bike,

carpool or use public transit. Eligible nominees must have been active or under way during the two-year timeframe from June 2008 to April 2010, and may be honored under certain award categories as determined by a panel of jurors. Winners will be announced in October 2010.

— Georgia Lambert

Submit nominations online at <mtc.ca.gov/awards> or call 510.817.5757 or e-mail <info@mtc.ca.gov> to request a nomination form. Nominations must be received by May 14, 2010.

Project Update

Envisioning a Stunning Park at the Foot of the Landmark New Bay Bridge East Span

Right now, it’s a ragged and underused patch of waterfront dotted with a few dilapidated structures, and carpeted with more asphalt and brown dirt than anything green. But over the next few years, the area will begin the transformation into Gateway Park, a landscaped and amenity-rich urban oasis gracing



Participants suggest possible amenities for the park via sticky notes.

the Oakland touchdown of the new Bay Bridge East Span. “It’s a world-class bridge, and we’re looking for a world-class park,” said Dan McElhinney, chief deputy district director for Caltrans District 4, at a recent public workshop that drew more than 100 people. The park will be stitched together from several parcels mostly sitting on the south side of the bridge touchdown, including land that will be opened up when the existing East Span is demolished. It is envisioned as a regional destination that will celebrate — and offer sweeping vistas of — the new landmark bridge while providing a window to the activity at the nearby Port of Oakland, with its towering container cranes.

“The port itself is a remarkable thing to look at,” said Sarah Kuehl, a partner with PWP Landscape Architecture of Berkeley, which is mapping out the park in conjunction with Perkins + Will, an architectural design firm in San Francisco. The park will provide much-needed recreational facilities for the nearby neighborhood of West Oakland, and serve as a launch pad and resting area for trips along the new East Span’s scenic bicycle and pedestrian path. Planners also have been discussing the possibility of incorporating public art, and renovating one of the existing buildings into a transportation museum with a special focus on bridges. Concessions like a restaurant, cafe and bike rentals will also likely



A workshop participant examines an aerial photo of the Gateway Park site.

be part of the package. Members of the public attending the recent workshop were eager to submit their own ideas for the park on sticky notes and comment cards. “Think BIG!!” wrote one attendee. Popular amenities like a dog park and skateboarding park came up, as did some more unusual potential uses, including big-band dances,

open-air cinema, yoga classes and opportunities for flash mob activities like pillow fights. Overseeing the effort is the Gateway Park Working Group, consisting of nine agencies with a stake in the site, including MTC’s Bay Area Toll Authority.

— Brenda Kahn

For updates and info on a June workshop, visit <BayBridgeGatewayPark.org>.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WWW.MTC.CA.GOV

Commissioners

- Scott Haggerty, Chair
Alameda County
- Adrienne J. Tissier, Vice Chair
San Mateo County
- Tom Azumbrado
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Tom Bates
Cities of Alameda County
- Dean J. Chu
Cities of Santa Clara County
- Dave Cortese
Association of Bay Area Governments
- Chris Daly
City and County of San Francisco
- Bill Dodd
Napa County and Cities
- Dorene M. Giacomini
U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal D. Glover
Contra Costa County
- Anne W. Halsted
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- Steve Kinsey
Marin County and Cities
- Sue Lempert
Cities of San Mateo County
- Jake Mackenzie
Sonoma County and Cities
- Jon Rubin
San Francisco Mayor's Appointee
- Bijan Sartipi
State Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
- James P. Spering
Solano County and Cities
- Amy Rein Worth
Cities of Contra Costa County
- Ken Yeager
Santa Clara County

Transactions

SPRING 2010

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, California 94607

510.817.5700 TEL.
510.817.5769 TDD/TTY
510.817.5848 FAX
info@mtc.ca.gov E-MAIL
mtc.ca.gov WEB

- Steve Heminger
Executive Director
- Ann Flemer
Deputy Executive Director, Policy
- Andrew B. Fremier
Deputy Executive Director, Operations
- Randy Rentschler
Director, Legislation and Public Affairs
- Brenda Kahn
Editor
- Joe Curley
Associate Editor
- Karin Betts, John Goodwin, Georgia Lambert
Editorial Staff
- Finger Design Associates, Oakland
Design and Production
- California Lithographers, Concord
Printing
- ♻️ Printed on recycled paper.
- ©2010 MTC. All rights reserved.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORT
FIRST CLASS
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oakland, CA
Permit No. 854